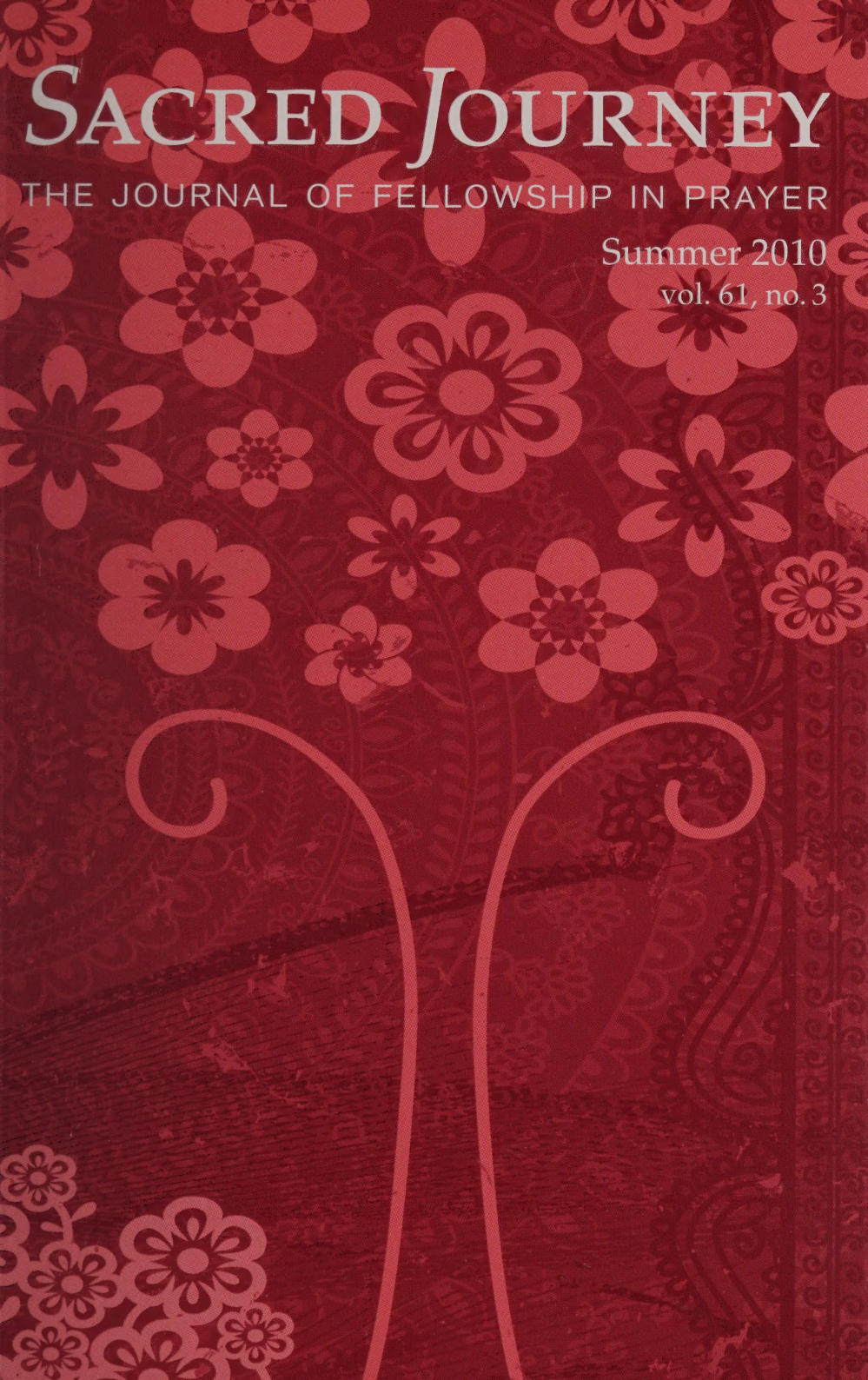


# SACRED JOURNEY

THE JOURNAL OF FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

Summer 2010

vol. 61, no. 3





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THE JOURNAL OF FELLOWSHIP IN PRAYER

## *Fellowship in Prayer*

encourages and supports  
a spiritual orientation to life,

promotes the practice  
of prayer, meditation,  
and service to others,

and helps bring about  
a deeper spirit of unity  
among humankind.





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We welcome submissions of articles on prayer, meditation, spiritual experience and practice, religious faith or similar topics, as well as prayers and poetry. We look for writing that expresses an individual's personal experience while also conveying a deeper message of universal appeal. Writing must be accessible to people of all traditions. Please include a brief biography and full contact information: name, address, phone numbers and email. Articles should not exceed 1500 words and should be submitted to the editor by email: [submissions@sacredjourney.org](mailto:submissions@sacredjourney.org). If necessary, they may be mailed.

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# We Are One

JANET M. HAAG

I recently had the opportunity to attend a graduation ceremony for fifty-nine interfaith ministers, of which our own DeeAnn Weir was one. The service for One Spirit Interfaith Seminary was held in the magnificent Riverside Church in New York City and the community who gathered to celebrate was a microcosm of humanity—men and women of different races, religions and cultures—young and old. The church was packed and I was struck by the pervasive spirit of acceptance and peace.

The graduates were described as “deeply rooted in their own traditions while profoundly open and respectful of others.” They spoke about their commitment to sacred service based on the wisdom of generations of saints and sages who remind us we are interconnected—we are one. The realization of such unity with the divine, with others, with oneself, with the earth is the goal of spiritual practice and the ground for living in a way that promotes justice and peace for all. It is a principle that has guided Fellowship In Prayer for 60 years and the reason we have invited people to come together at our 60th Anniversary Conference to explore how prayer, within and across traditions, can be an answer for the 21st century. Prayer is transformative, inviting us to break down barriers, to open our minds to new thoughts, our hearts to greater compassion.

Today, we have access to the wisdom and practices of myriad religions, many we once only knew by name, if at all. We are now living in an inter-spiritual age and it remains to be seen how the future will unfold but we can safely predict that it will be different. We’ve experienced this many times—change is part of the dynamism of life.

Certainly, our understanding of the place of the feminine in religion has evolved and changed over the years. It has been front

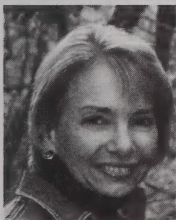


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and center at one time and almost invisible at another. There have been obstacles to overcome and divisions to be healed and it has taken courageous women and men to challenge the status quo and move us to a new level of consciousness. We touched on this reality at the interfaith dialogue luncheon on Women of the Covenant that we co-sponsored in May and we have tried to share a little of that experience with you.

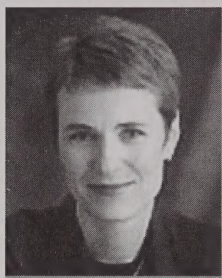
In this issue of *SACRED JOURNEY*, Diane Hamilton also invites us to experience Big Mind/Big Heart as a way to unlock the power and grace within and embrace a richer, more enlightened view of life. She humbly submits that only history will tell if Big Mind/Big Heart is a fleeting form of Zen Practice or one that will become deeply rooted in Buddhist tradition and reach well beyond it.

Hopefully, you will find something in this issue that will challenge you to explore a new perspective and envision at least one new possibility for yourself and the communities to which you belong. It is likely this journal will reach you a little later than usual; the delay is related to our involvement in conference preparations, we apologize and trust you will understand. **\$J**



Janet M. Haag is the Executive Director of Fellowship in Prayer.

## An Interview with Diane Musho Hamilton



*Diane Musho Hamilton is a gifted facilitator, mediator and spiritual teacher living in Utah. She is well known as an innovator in facilitating group dialogues, especially controversial conversations about culture, religion, race and gender relations.*

*Diane is a fully ordained Zen priest and teacher. She has studied Buddhism since 1984 and was given dharma transmission by her Zen master, Genpo Roshi in 2006. She works with Big Mind process; a facilitation technique synthesized by Roshi to convey Eastern teachings to Western audiences.*

*Diane is founder and core faculty member of iEvolve: A Global Practice Community, committed to fostering the practice of a World Spirituality which honors the insights of the great traditions and is rooted in integral and evolutionary principals. It was co-founded by Sally Kempton, Diane Musho Hamilton, Marc Gafni and Sofia Diaz.*

*Diane teaches Integral Spirituality as a co-director of Integral Life Spiritual Center and has worked with Ken Wilber and the Integral Institute in Denver since 2004. We are very thankful she took time from her busy schedule to speak with us. During our interview she clearly personified that she "practices what she teaches!"*

**Fellowship in Prayer:** As the first successor to Genpo Roshi in the Big Mind lineage, can you tell us what Big Mind/Big Heart is?

**Diane Hamilton:** One of the ways we experience the world is through the lens of our individual or separate identity. Meditation practice teaches us to relax this separation and expand our



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identity. As the boundary dissipates, we feel more expansive and more compassionate. We begin to realize the separate self identity, the smaller self, is very limiting. When we experience boundlessness and connectedness to all things, we are identifying as Big Mind/Big Heart.

**I understand how compassion is Big Heart but can you further explain Big Mind?**

Well, if I can just practice with you for a second, perhaps you will understand—so let's begin by me asking you to speak to the self—the ordinary self. So, to whom am I speaking?

**Lisa.**

Yes, Lisa, as Lisa—the ordinary self, what's your job, what do you do?

**I'm an editor.**

You're an editor. You have a very specific role. And what are some of the other things you do as the self?

**I'm a daughter, I'm a sister, an aunt and a friend.**

So you have roles vis-à-vis your relationships: a daughter, sister, aunt and friend. I imagine these are slightly different experiences from being an editor. So context and role defines a bit of who you are. Some of your relationships are smooth with an experience of success while others are rocky. What are some of the other things that you do as the self?

**I exercise. I read. I take walks outside.**

Yes, you are basically in charge of the self, her health and well-

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being. As this identity, do you experience any kind of stress?

**Yes, I would say I do.**

There is stress associated with responsibility. High responsibility—a lot of care-taking and time management. So now, I'm going to ask you to identify as Big Mind for just a moment. You don't know what this is but I'm going to facilitate. Just sit as Big Mind and I will ask you a couple of questions. To whom am I speaking?

**Lisa.**

Okay, I don't want to speak to Lisa this time. I want to speak to Big Mind. We're attached to a certain identity, right? You're attached to the identity of Lisa. That's the one you're in all the time. Identify instead as Big Mind. Just sit as Big Mind for a moment. It may feel a bit strange because you don't usually sit as Big Mind. Now, to whom am I speaking?

**Big Mind.**

As Big Mind, how big are you?

**As Big Mind, I feel bigger. I feel less stress. I feel—lighter actually.**

Beautiful. So just notice what this identity does. As Big Mind, you feel bigger. You automatically feel more relaxed. It's different, isn't it? As Big Mind do you notice a limit, a boundary?

**No, I don't feel as limited as I do when I'm in the Lisa role.**

Precisely! Wow! You look around as Big Mind and feel no boundaries. So here's another question, and you're doing beautifully—as Big Mind, let me ask you, when were you born?

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**I'm being born.**

Right! Every moment you are being born. What else can you say about birth as Big Mind?

**It feels new and fresh; a mystery.**

Yes, it is a mystery and you can't quite find the beginning. In the Buddhist tradition we would say that you were unborn. As Big Mind, there is this paradox—I always have been and yet I'm birthing new forms at every moment.

**This is pretty amazing!**

Exactly. Now if I ask you to be Big Heart, you connect to compassion. Basically Big Mind/Big Heart is the experience of meditation. And you could say the experience of meditation is the experience of reality or the oneness of reality. Most of us sit in meditation as the small self and never really break through. But my teacher, Genpo Roshi, developed this skillful, elegant and simple means to help people see beyond the small identity.

**As a Zen priest with many years of specialized training, how do you answer the critics who say these ideas circumvent 2500 years of established Buddhist practice?**

I say their role within Buddhism is to maintain the wisdom of the tradition. They're coming from the perspective of preservationists, and it is an important role for them to play. My teacher both preserves the tradition of *Zazen* but he also comes from the perspective of innovating the tradition for our time. Only time will tell whether the skillful means of Big Mind/Big Heart he proposes will persist, whether this method will remain useful within the tradition or whether it will pass out of the tradition because it was simply a way of teaching that is particular to this time. Innovation and preservation go hand-in-hand. In tradi-



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tions such as religion, art, music, etc. there are always people who preserve and those who are innovative. This dynamic shapes what the tradition will be five hundred years from now. At one time, the idea of the *Bodhisattva* was an innovation; in fact, *Mahayana* Buddhism was an innovation; the *Vajrayana* tradition was also an innovation from the Buddha's original teaching. Every great branch of Buddhism that grew from the moment of the Buddha's enlightenment was an innovation.

**How does Ken Wilber's Integral Spirituality, which you now teach, fit into this picture?**

I think the essence of Integral Spirituality is that it both includes and transcends the great traditions. It seeks to incorporate the insights of science and psychology because to have meaning for our time any spirituality ultimately has to grapple with science's critique of religion and the realities of the post-modern age. Integral Spirituality is very much a phenomenon of our time. It is world-centric as opposed to ethno-centric. Many people today are interested in understanding and embracing traditions from across the globe. They practice a kind of Integral Spirituality without calling it that—the readers of your publication for instance. Lots of people still remain in a traditional container, whether it is Christianity, Islam, or Buddhism and the tradition is very powerful. But not everyone is there. There are those of us who travel a lot and have relatives and friends from other traditions. We attend weddings that are different from what we're used to. Culture is very organic and there is an incredible amount of cross-fertilization happening right now.

There has never before been a time in history when all the traditions, their wisdom and teachings, their stories, practices and rituals, have been so completely available. In America for instance, we may have grown up in a Christian context but our spirituality has been influenced by Zen. Or we may have been born and raised as a Jew but we feel very much at home

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with our Christian friends. Or maybe we're Hindu and have done a lot of yoga as our base practice, but we're influenced by Rumi. The Shamanic traditions, of course, are even older than the mythic traditions by at least fifteen thousand years. So twenty thousand years ago we had the Shamanic traditions and between three to five thousand years ago the mythic traditions emerged. Many of us have had some kind of Shamanic experience. Perhaps, we've participated in a ritual with indigenous people or have a Shamanic dimension to our own practice. Integral Spirituality proposes that because we are developing as human beings, every part of our history is included. Shamanism comes back on line when we become Integral because it has a place in the history of humanity and this makes it still relevant in our time.

### **Can you focus a little more on the relationship of Integral Spirituality to traditional institutional religious practice?**

Well, it's very important to recognize the tradition and importance of religious institutions. They are powerful containers for people; places that hold their family, civic and community lives. There is coherence in the teachings; there is familiarity when entering a church or a synagogue or an ashram. People understand the lineage—and those who represent the teaching. If we are in a Christian church and see a depiction of Jesus, we know who he is; by the same token if we are Hindu, we know who the great saints in Hinduism are. This coherence and familiarity serves a really important social function. Institutional religion actually functions well in the fabric of society. Integral Spirituality does not, in any way, intend to displace or have an interest in displacing, institutional religions. However, it does have an interest in giving people—especially the many people who have transitioned out of institutional religion because they found it too confining, a way to practice with a group of people who are Integral in their sensibilities—who see many valid paths and

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ways to worship, to be devoted to God and the spiritual dimension in their lives. These people often differentiate themselves from their institutional religion but they don't want to throw it out completely, they just don't want to be held in such a tight container and they want to incorporate the truths that are unfolding in our time. They want to learn from science and psychology and integrate those insights. They might have felt their religion was telling them too much about what to think or how to act and/or it was too opposed to other ways of doing things, to other ways of practicing. Integral Spirituality offers them a way to be in tune with their instinctive sensibilities that there is more than one way. As mentioned earlier, there is always tension between preservation and innovation that has to be grappled with. The dualism between expansion and contraction is simply part of the creative process.

### **So, what exactly does an Integral spiritual practice look like?**

In Ken Wilber's view, an Integral spiritual practice has at least four components. The first is the spiritual dimension. Some kind of methodology—such as Big Mind, deep Zazen, a relationship with God, prayer or chanting . . . the point is we expand and become one with a much greater whole. This is the spirit. The second component involves psychological work. Psychology has revealed so much to us about the way we pattern our thoughts and actions on our emotions, rooted in our families of origin and our culture. Specifically, at this level, we have to work on what we call shadow, that part of our consciousness that is at play, but not brought into our full awareness. Through shadow work, using dreams and feedback from our relationships, we start to pick up and identify with those parts of ourselves that we haven't wanted to acknowledge. Doing this is necessary to our becoming whole. Third, Ken suggests that physical practice is important because our minds and bodies are not separate entities; ultimately a strong physical body makes for a strong



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realization. There has been some research—suggesting people who cross-train are stronger. Integral practice is a kind of cross-training and people who cross-train reportedly do better in their meditative discipline. The final component is to study the Integral framework so that we can be post-modern human beings who are still very connected to our history, our tradition, our families, our context. Integral Spirituality provides specific tools to help us understand and navigate more easily through our current reality.

### **And this is something that can be taught?**

Yes. Let me share a really simple example, a small tidbit from Integral theory to help you understand. There are three basic perspectives that come from language, “I” first person, “you” second person, “it” third person. Science is all about “it.” Most religion is about “thou,” the second person relationship with God. Zen practice is about “I.” All the mystical dimensions of practice are about becoming one with. So when you go to have a dialog across these different perspectives you have to remember the differences. Science isn’t science if it doesn’t have its split. When a person of faith tries to speak to a person of science, they need to recognize they’re not even asking the same questions, nor do their verifications of the truth match. In order to have a productive discussion, we have to go to a *metta* position—that can include that different reference point. This is what we call a metaframe. There are a million of these helpful concepts in Integral theory.

### **What is the goal of iEvolve, the global practice and service community of which you are co-founder?**

Its goal is simply to bring people, informed by Integral, together to practice. We offer retreats, teachings and practice sessions. We network people around the globe who, for whatever reason, have this particular interest.

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**Lotus Lounge is a part of iEvolve that focuses specifically on women, what do you think about the evolution of women right now?**

Women need to be aware of a built-in contradiction in what we might call our liberation process. Women's liberation was originally all about parity, about fairness in jobs and opportunity in the workplace, being treated equally and given everything that a man is given within a culture. We know this is not the case for many women around the world, even today. But those of us who have achieved a somewhat equal status, as women we now face the challenge of somehow finding a way to occupy both our sameness and our differences. When we entered the work world and things became fair, we started to take our place beside men in the public square and engage in public discourse and we realized we don't want to show up as men in order to participate. We want to be females and bring the qualities that go along with our gender to the table. So the issue is how we are to occupy our sameness and difference with elegance and without hostility.

**Do you believe there is a qualitative difference between mixed gendered groups and women-only groups?**

Without a doubt. And this is where I'm going to use a bit of an Integral frame and move from talking about what is true in the third person to what my experience is because I'm not interested in arguing with the reader about whether in reality women are this way or not. I'm simply going to say what my experience is so we can get over the argument around what's true. Do you see the move to Integral?

**Yes.**

So, in my experience when I work with all women there are quite a few things that are heightened or distinctive. One is the capacity women have to flow. For instance, if I decide to do

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something simple like change the schedule, women have the facility to change really quickly. Women similarly move in and out of emotional states more quickly than men do. What is great about men is that they create stability, a real stability of emotional feeling. With women there is more volatility and a greater capacity to change and their interest in intimacy is higher. Women want to get close, to engage in an interchange, to talk about their lives, even something as personal as their sex life. They go in for a quality of intimacy that feels really different to me from what happens in a mixed group.

**How has Big Mind/Big Heart and Integral Spirituality made a difference in your life?**

I credit my teacher, Genpo Roshi, and the Big Mind process with helping me clarify my true nature so I am more deeply at home in the world and in my life. Integral has been an enlivening and fascinating call to express myself in the world. Big Mind has helped me find my home and Integral has helped me find my expression in the world.

**How have you been affected in your relationships with your husband and children, your family, your work?**

I would say again that with Big Mind, I'm fundamentally more at peace with the way things are and more accepting of people for who they are, able to see their uniqueness and let them be. From an Integral perspective, I have started to view us all as in a developmental process. I see my children as developing beings at various life stages who are different based on what they need and what they're learning. The same is true of my relationship with my husband. I don't see us as a static unit any more. I see our relationship as an evolutionary process in which we're both growing and changing. We go in and out of phases of powerful identity with each other and periods of dis-identification. I've learned this process of identification moving to dis-identification and back to re-identification is, by nature, the process of



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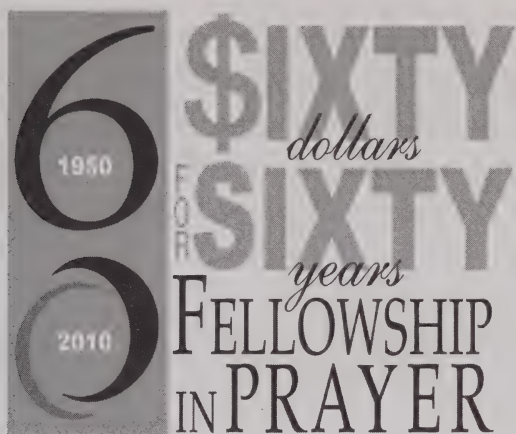
tion and back to re-identification is, by nature, the process of development. We often think dis-identification is bad but dis-identification is absolutely necessary to our growth.

**You indicated you are now more accepting as a result of practicing Zen Buddhism, Integral, and Big Mind/Big Heart, is it safe to say you have changed?**

The way I see things has changed quite a bit. Like many of us, I had a certain kind of existential anxiety. I wasn't as at home in myself. I was searching for meaning. I was wondering about human suffering. I frequently experienced suffering but I didn't understand its role or its place. I imagined I could feel more integrated and complete as a human being and through my thirty years of practice I now think I do. I'm an emotionally intense person but I move through moods really quickly and I don't attach to them. I like to say I'm very forgiving because I don't have a good memory.

**Thank you for helping our readers understand Integral Spirituality. Your graciousness comes across in your persona, your voice, in who you are and it's quite beautiful.**

Thank you. 



Fellowship in Prayer is celebrating 60 years of promoting spiritual practice within and across religious traditions as a path to peace and justice! We are here because you believe it is important for someone to stand at the crossroads of many faiths, encouraging people to center their lives and claim together the wisdom of the ages and the power of the spirit now to effect personal and social transformation. Thank you for standing with us!

To bring our message of unity and hope to the world for another 60 years, we need your financial support now.

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DAUGHTERS OF ISRAEL,  
GOD RAISED YOU FROM BENEATH THE TREE,  
SO NOW REMEMBER HOW IT WAS PLANTED.  
THEREFORE REJOICE, DAUGHTERS OF JERUSALEM!

BLESSED HILDEGARD OF BINGEN

For me, perhaps the most profound beauty of  
Heaven is its plurality and diversity of people.

DAISY KHAN

EVERY TIME I ACT WITHOUT KNOWING THE OUTCOME,  
WITH THE RISK OF FAILURE LOOMING BEFORE ME,  
I TRY TO SEE THAT AS A SPIRITUAL MOMENT.

FAITH ADIELE

We have all known the long loneliness, and we have  
found that the answer is community.

DOROTHY DAY

GOD PLANTED IN OUR HEART SKILLS AND  
A VOCATION WITHOUT ASKING ABOUT GENDER.

RABBI REGINA SARA JONAS

Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember,  
you have within you the strength, the patience, and the  
passion to reach for the stars to change the world.

HARRIET TUBMAN



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AN OTHERNESS THAT CAN REPEL US INITIALLY  
CAN JERK US OUT OF OUR HABITUAL SELFISHNESS  
AND GIVE US INTONATIONS OF THAT SACRED  
OTHERNESS, WHICH IS GOD.

KAREN ARMSTRONG

And the time came when the risk to remain tight in a  
bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.

ANAIIS-NIN

THE MOMENT COMES BENEATH THE SURFACE  
OF THE WATER, WHEN ALL BOUNDARIES DISSOLVE.

ANITA DIAMANT

IF WE CAN STAY AWAKE WHEN OUR LIVES ARE CHANGING,  
SECRETS WILL BE REVEALED TO US—SECRETS ABOUT  
OURSELVES, ABOUT THE NATURE OF LIFE, AND ABOUT THE  
ETERNAL SOURCE OF HAPPINESS AND PEACE THAT IS ALWAYS  
AVAILABLE, ALWAYS RENEWABLE, ALREADY WITHIN US.

ELIZABETH LESSER

WHEN YOUR HEART SPEAKS, TAKE GOOD NOTES.

JUDITH CAMPBELL

I choose to risk my significance; to live so that which  
comes to me as seed goes to the next blossom and  
that which comes to me as blossom, goes on as fruit.

DAWNA MARKOVA

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# To Have A God

JOHN TYLER

**Perhaps the most prolific subject ever written about.** A word with a thousand meanings. Is God knowable? Does God really exist? If so, can we prove it?

The picture of God as a white-bearded patriarch, majestically sitting on a cloud in the sky, thunderbolt in hand, is today more the subject of cartoons than of serious religious thought.

Yet many thinkers are still put off by such simplistic beliefs and even more opposed to a fanaticism that sometimes accompanies them. They have given up on the search to find and understand God. They often chafe at the idea of a paternalistic authoritarian God (or church) telling them what is right and wrong, and how to live. Some choose to be atheist or agnostic—to believe there is no God or that God is unknowable.

Often it is for them fundamentally a question of freedom.

If having a god means to value, revere, fear or give extraordinary power to something or someone, above all else, then everyone has a god—and, through intense introspection, we can all identify it. The question then becomes whom we choose as our God.

This is perhaps the most important question ever asked! But, interestingly, Mary Baker Eddy posed the question in a slightly different form. In her seminal work, *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures*, she asked, “What is God?” Not *who* but *what*. In doing so, she opened up a whole new way to understand—to know—God. Even though millennia ago the Apostle John identified God not as a person but as love itself (I John 4:16), still many of our world cultures—both East and West—continue to think of God in personal terms, usually as a “He.” Comforting as this can be in many situations, unless we expand our understanding of God, the identification of God as

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a person can lead to limiting God to a being in time and space.

Almost a century and a half ago Mrs. Eddy—breaking away from such traditions—identified seven impersonal terms that free thought from the limitations of personal deification. One of them is Truth. Early in my practice of Christian Science I had a patient who was greatly disturbed by the notion of God as He or She. But it turned out he was perfectly comfortable acknowledging God as Truth, as the essence of truth, the source of all truth. This was for him a tremendously freeing discovery that enabled him to begin the exciting exploration of the question, “What is truth?”

With the other six terms—Principle, Mind, Soul, Spirit, Life, and Love—Mary Baker Eddy expands and deepens our capacity to understand God. She calls these terms “synonyms” for God, but in her usage they are more than common synonyms. They are full-fledged names for God that allow us to broaden and deepen our understanding of God’s nature. Each one takes us in a qualitatively different direction, each one frees us from the limited sense of a personal entity. Mrs. Eddy noted, “Mortals believe in a finite personal God; while God is infinite Love, which must be unlimited.” (*Science and Health*, p. 312). These seven synonyms, seen spiritually, give a balanced picture of the one infinitely intelligent Creator continuing to develop and maintain a joyous and beautiful spiritual reality.

When I first became interested in Christian Science, I felt I had found the two greatest freedom fighters of all time: Christ Jesus and Mary Baker Eddy. They were lifting us not only out of a world of materialistic limitation, but into a reality of unrestricted freedom. I remember explaining this to a school friend of mine, a young man who was to become a Nobel laureate in physics, an atheist at the time. He had never known a Christian Scientist and was interested in how this Science could be used in healing. Accepting physics as his god, he was nevertheless intrigued by the breadth and depth of Mrs. Eddy’s understanding of God as an impersonal infinitely creative force; as



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divine Love, which could be understood as the Principle of the universe. But he didn't see how understanding this would help someone in healing a physical body.

At that point in our discussion, I realized I hadn't identified a crucial aspect of God's nature—namely, that God is good—pure, moral goodness. I explained that the Old Testament might be seen as a testament of centuries of searching for an ever purer, more loving, more accurate understanding of God, which culminated in Christ Jesus' understanding of God as pure love itself. My friend had always seen God as a person, sometimes rewarding, sometimes angered or punishing.

I explained that Mrs. Eddy, before she used the term Chris-

Mortals believe in a finite personal God;  
while God is infinite Love,  
which must be unlimited.

tian Science, originally called her discovery Moral Science. She saw how crucial it was to be able to identify, to value and embody, the essential God-quality, goodness. She saw that learning to love was the means to this end. In her first work designed to teach this Science, she asked the question, "How can I succeed . . . so that my demonstration in healing shall be wonderful and immediate?" She answered, "By being like Jesus, by asking yourself am I honest, am I just, am I merciful and am I pure? (Robert Peel, *Mary Baker Eddy—The Years of Discovery*, p. 233). The first step in healing is living these moral qualities.

My atheist friend began to appreciate the freedom that flows from and understanding of God as Principle itself. He especially loved the idea that God is understandable, even if our work to understand God takes study, prayer and above all practice.

The Science Mary Baker Eddy discovered, based on Jesus' teachings, is extraordinarily simple. All of its teachings flow

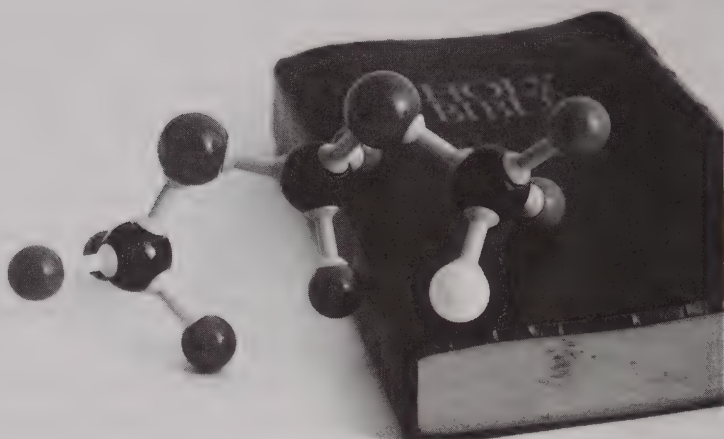
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from understanding God's nature, God's allness, and man as inseparable from God and totally Godlike. The key to our being able to use this Science is an understanding of both God and of our relationship to God. Perhaps one of the greatest challenges humanity has is sorting through the innumerable concepts of God that society keeps throwing at us—some true, many false. But you can usually identify the false ones. They're the more complicated ones—the ones that explain how, somehow, even though God is completely good, He chose to create evil, or somehow to include it in His universe.

The lifesaver that Mrs. Eddy threw out to all of us is the simplicity of an understanding of God as All—unqualifiedly an infinitely intelligent, infinitely loving, infinitely powerful, purely spiritual continuing source, including each one of us—and in no way the source of evil. That's it. The hard part seems to be learning that there isn't anything else but God's creation. It's hard because it seems as though the whole world is teaching us that there's lots of stuff out there that God didn't create: wars, plagues, death, misery, etc.

Mary Baker Eddy discovered in Jesus' teachings the key to our freedom: that we have a choice of where we live, mentally. Jesus spoke constantly about God's kingdom not as some distant place but as here—in us, and us in it. Yes, it's a challenge to move, mentally, out of the world of a mixture of good and evil, into a world where everything is the result of God. But the reward of doing so is immeasurable. It is freedom—total freedom—from the limitations the material world places on us, fears of accident, sickness, lack.

Can we let go of our beliefs in a world created by material forces, and take up residence mentally in God's kingdom? To enable us to do this was Mrs. Eddy's goal. She wrote, "The lame, the deaf, the dumb, the blind, the sick, the sensual, the sinner, I wished to save from the slavery of their own beliefs and from the educational system of the Pharaohs, who to-day, as of yore, hold the children of Israel in bondage" (*Science and*



*Health*, p 226). Those educational systems are hard at work today. To be free of their influence involves less battling against them, and much more simply learning more about the home we all live in, God's kingdom.

For some atheists not only is there no God but religion itself is a means of controlling people. Yet the practice of Christian Science frees from the domination of materialistic thinking, just as Jesus' teachings freed his disciples and enabled them to heal all kinds of physical diseases.

Today, as we try to follow in Jesus' footsteps, using the guideposts Mrs. Eddy lays out in *Science and Health*, sometimes a complete healing seems impossible to reach. We may be tempted to think, "Maybe this worked for Jesus and Mrs. Eddy, but it just isn't working for me!" Or even, "Maybe those atheists are right—maybe there is no God after all."

Let's face it; we all have cases—our own or others'—where even after months of prayer there seems to be little progress. When Jesus was asked by the disciples why they had failed to heal a boy with epilepsy, he told them, after healing the boy, "Because of your unbelief" (Matt. 17:14-21). It seems to me that his answer indicates that the great need is to dig deeper



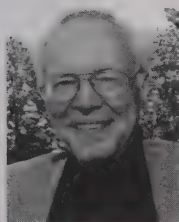
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in prayer, spiritual seeing and to live more fully the life which reflects good, God, Love itself.

Several years ago a friend gave me a “holusion,” a color print made up of several million dots, which appeared to be an abstract expressionist painting. She told me that if I focused properly, I could see a beautiful 3-D world in it. I looked and looked and looked. I came back to it maybe a hundred times. Nothing! Then, one day, I shifted my focus. Suddenly that lovely 3-D world appeared. It seemed so real I felt I could step into it.

I know many of us have had that experience in prayer. It’s the coming of the Christ—the spiritual idea of our wholeness and perfection as God’s reflection coming clearly into focus in our thought. It’s a glimpse of spiritual reality, and it occurs when, perhaps after nights of deeper digging in prayer, we are able to change our focus. We are able not only to see God’s kingdom but to realize that we are already in it. This is the understanding leading us “into the land of Christian Science, where fetters fall and the rights of man are fully known and acknowledged” (*Science and Health*, pp. 226-227). There we can see, understand God, and healing comes.

I like to think that everyone is on the path to finding their ultimate love, their true God, *the* true God. Each person’s path is unique. We can pray with the Psalmist, “Thou will show me the path of life: in thy presence is fullness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore” (Ps. 16:11).



John Tyler is a teacher of Christian Science and a member of the Christian Science Board of Lectureship. He has been active in the healing ministry for over thirty years. This article appeared in the *Christian Science Sentinel* © March 15, 2010 and reprinted with permission.

John Tyler is presenting "How Does Prayer Heal: Learning a Conscious Use of Our Spiritual Sense" at the June 2010 conference.

# The Fresh Air of Possibility

JANICE AMMON

*Invocation at the Interfaith Dialogue Luncheon on the National Day of Prayer, 2010.*

O Holy One, we thank you for this sacred gathering.

We thank you for this holy moment, this moment in which we join our hearts together in prayer with one another—with women and men from faith traditions other than our own. Indeed, this is a wonderful way to mark the National Day of Prayer.

O Holy One, we ask that you would be in the midst of our conversations and presentations this afternoon. Help us to open doors and windows which are sometimes closed way too tight. May the fresh air of possibility and community and hope flow through this room and through our hearts. From this time together, may we go forth to help create communities where all are welcome to live and worship fully.

We offer all of our prayers with gratitude, and with anticipation for what awaits us in this time together. Amen

Rev. Janice Smith Ammon currently serves as the Bryant M. Kirkland Minister of the Chapel at Princeton Theological Seminary. She served at Central Presbyterian Church in Summit, NJ, and the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in Manhattan prior to being called to Princeton. Rev. Ammon worked as a nurse before beginning her studies at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1987.



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# The Call

SUE COPPERNOLL

Sacred Presence, you are  
Encountered amid strife,  
Heard above the noise of life,  
Perceived in silence and darkness.

Spirit of Love and Light, you haunt  
The night and illuminate my days,  
Calling, from shadows of doubt,  
To my soul's longing for hope and home.

Nameless One, you appear  
In all and in every moment,  
Setting your seal upon that which is created,  
Anointing that which is yet to be.

Sacred Presence, you surround,  
Enfold, guide, and protect.  
You summon me to engagement  
With your world, and your people.

Eternal Voice, you speak  
Without words, you make plain the way.  
Fear subsides,  
And the journey begins anew.

Sue Coppernoll, a retired pastoral counselor, is a woman of words, both written and spoken. A poet and lifelong journal keeper, Sue leads workshops in the art of journal writing as a source of wisdom, solace, self-expression and spiritual healing.



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# God of Newness

MALINDA FILLINGIM

God of Newness,  
Erase the old that holds me down with fear and dread.  
Evolve in me the reality that newness can be found through You.  
When I hide from my own self,  
help me to stick out my head and be found by Your grace.  
Give me the power to walk through doors opened by you.  
Help me, God, not to walk with timidity but with confidence  
that you walk before and with me each step of the way.  
Amen.

Malinda Fillingim serves as a hospice chaplain in Rome, GA where she lives with her husband, David. She is the mother of two college students and enjoys long walks, photography and playing with her dog. She and David enjoy going to churches to sing and tell stories of faith.

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# Susurrus

SANDRA M. TULLY

All day your pliable hands  
steer me toward Home  
Your silent voice  
urges me *turn inward*

All day your open arms  
gather my splintered pieces  
Your open hearth  
warms me through

All my life  
I have heard and seen  
Your Spirit in the footprints  
*follow the path.*

Following a thirty-year career as a Speech Pathologist and Educator, Sandra M. Tully now lives a contemplative life as poet, mentor and companion to other spiritual seekers. Family, nature, prayer, meditation and service provide the inspiration for her poetry. Sandra's writing appears in a variety of literary and multifaith journals.

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# Encountering the Dark Mother in the Woods

BETH BARTLETT

**We were facing an abyss.**

After months of trudging our way through the murky swamps of hurt and misunderstanding and the dry deserts of doubt and despair that our marriage had become, we had come to this. The image that had me in its grip that morning was of a great chasm, with this man I no longer recognized on one side and me on the other. I could hear his familiar voice, but could no longer see him. It was as if I could hear his voice calling out to me, "I'm right here," but much as I longed to join him, I found myself completely unable to see how. Finding myself blinded, and knowing only that there was a chasm between us, I was afraid to move, let alone leap. I feared my leaping would plunge me deeper into the abyss instead of his arms. As I listened to him calling, I suddenly became aware that

he was able to see not only me, but the chasm and all of its contours as well. Yet, despite having all the necessary resources to find his way across, he was nevertheless insisting that I come to him. This time, however, I needed him to come to me. My request was met with silence.

I had reached bottom. I was used up, and knew more profoundly than I had ever known anything, that the only thing I had left was prayer. In this place of emptiness, I took the dogs, walked up into the woods behind our house, and began to pray. The prayer was more a silent cry of my heart, a plea that some way we might find each other again.

The response was astonishingly immediate. "Honey"—in its familiarity the term of endearment was startling, yet sweet, touching. Her strong, reassuring presence encompassed me. She seemed some

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combination of the Southern doctor who cared for me and my heart when I was in grad school and the Bahamian woman—a stranger—who helped me when I was utterly lost in Birmingham, England, missing her own connection to stay on the bus with me until I was back in familiar territory. And she was talking with me in a firm yet tender, sonorous voice, “Honey, you’ve been waitin’ on that man to leap over and come get you ever since he broke your heart. But he cain’t, honey, he cain’t. His little heart’s too wrapped in fear, and you gotta know that, honey. But he’s right there. He’s right there. All he needs you to do is reach out your hand, and he can reach out his, and pull you over. But you gotta reach out your hand. You gotta reach out your hand.”

I could feel the resistance in me. No! I was always the one who reached out first, and now I was spent, and I needed him to reach out to me. But I knew the truth of what she said. I knew he was

afraid, and her speaking it was compelling. “Yes, she’s right,” I thought, my resistance melting. “I need to reach out my hand.” It was as simple as that.

She went on in great detail with specific instructions of what we needed to do to set ourselves on a path of healing. When she had finished, I remarked to her of how quickly she had come to me, of how simple it had been—the asking and the answering—and she replied with a chuckle, “Honey, all you ever needed to do was pray. What took you so long? I was always here. You shoulda been prayin’ all along. Not that prayin’ with words you been doin’, but prayin’ with your ears . . . listenin’. . . just listenin’.”

She was reminding me of what I had long known, the prayers that have given me the truest guidance in my life have been the ones when I have simply been still and opened my heart. More than the prayers of supplication, of gratitude and even the powerful heart-opening



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of the *metta* meditation, it is what she said, "prayin' with my ears . . . listenin', listenin' with my heart" that has given me the deepest grounding and connection. Its clarity and truth has repeatedly astounded me. If I could just remember to listen.

Yet, as important as that reminder was, the more profound truth for me was in her saying, "I was always here." I recognized her right away. She had been with me all of my life. My knowledge of her was familiar and present, yet ancient, preceding even this lifetime. Friend, mother, guide, wise woman, source, earth. At last this—the dark feminine divine.

Synchronistically, a few days later, in the Jungian work I was doing, I read of the significance of the encounter with the dark goddess in one's dreams and of how embracing her wisdom is essential for reclaiming the abandoned self and for healing the split between body and spirit. She carries the energy we need to become whole. *In Dancing in the Flames: The Dark*

*Goddess in the Transformation of Consciousness*, Marion Woodman explains, "Experiencing her in our body is a startling step toward experiencing ourselves whole. That sense of wholeness is essential to healing." Indeed, she had shown up in my dreams prior to our meeting in the woods—in a black swan who lifted me out of a walled city, in a young black woman who nudged me out of my familiar routines, in an older black woman who wanted me to clean my junk out of her basement—but I needed that direct awake encounter fully to incorporate her. I'm grateful that I met her in the woods before I came across her in texts, or I might have disbelieved, thinking that I had conjured her from a suggestion planted in my mind from books. Experiencing her personally first, the texts instead served to provide a context and meaning beyond myself.


In the weeks and months to come, I would learn from many sources of the restorative nature, for women, but



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also for men, of encountering the dark mother in dreams and intuitions. For me, meeting the dark female divine in the woods has indeed been restorative in my life. Following her guidance, my act of reaching out did not so much enable my husband to pull me over to his side of the divide as it mended the very chasm itself. Not only did this begin the process of healing the splits in our relationship, but it also helped me to bridge the chasms in my own being and to recover my own wholeness. Since that initial conversation with this loving mama god, I have felt clearer, more deeply grounded, more connected to the life force. But the restoration implied here has a much larger context.

As a culture, we are also at an abyss. We have so long cut ourselves off from the dark feminine divine, wrongly regarding it as evil and fearsome, that we suffer in war, domination, imperialism and a despoiled earth. Opening to the wisdom of the dark, earthy, feminine divine as rich and moist and fertile is as essential to the healing of the chasms in our collective psyche as it is to the healing of our personal psyches.

Her insights are direct, clear and straightforward, by "listenin', just listenin'," and reaching out when we are most resistant to it, we can begin to heal the woundedness in all of our lives. 

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Beth Bartlett is Professor of Women's Studies at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Her books include *Journey of the Heart: Spiritual Insights on the Road to a Transplant* and *Rebellious Feminism: Camus's Ethic of Rebellion and Feminist Thought*.

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# Many Rooms

PAMELA POE

**I have been a seashell collector since early childhood.** You can find shells on my windowsill, a mantle, and often nestled on my desk amid stacks of paper. I discovered a seashell night-light at a Delaware shore beach shop, which now lights my kitchen corridor. The first time I saw Andrew Wyeth's painting of his wife's home office and noticed the carefully lined-up seashells he had included on each windowsill, I sensed a kindred spirit and felt welcomed into the empty, waiting space he revealed.

Of all the shells I have discovered, it is the nautilus shell that has always fascinated me the most. I have heard it said that the animal inhabiting this shell begins by living in one small "room", then eventually must seal it up and move on to a bigger "room" as growth occurs. When I first heard of this, I thought of the New Testament Bible passage Jesus uses in the Gospel of John 14:2 at the Last Supper to teach his disciples about life stages:

In my Father's house are many rooms: if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you.

For the animal in the shell, at each stage there is not much of an opportunity to look back; the only real option is to move forward. With this movement forward begins a brand new life with more room to stretch and grow. If such a creature could feel a moment's sadness to leave behind all it has known, the sentiment must be fleeting before it plunges ahead into a larger, roomier and more welcoming dwelling place. And what is left behind is a new stage in a lovely, luminous life pathway etched in the side of the spiraled shell.



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This thought is a comfort to me when beginning a new phase of life. Such changes in my life have sometimes appeared to be rather abrupt, while at other times they have gradually been revealed over time. About a decade after I began a career in music teaching, I found myself literally without a voice for weeks at a time. After a period of struggle, I decided to leave my safe but confining job and asked for a tour at a local radio station. Not realizing where this would lead, I began to inhabit the next “room” of my journey, moving outward into a new career in communication. I have happily inhabited this room now for decades.

Anne Morrow Lindberg, in *Gift From the Sea*, portrays each life stage as a type of shell experienced from a woman’s perspective. She introduces her book with a wish to simply reflect on the pattern of her own life. As she shared her writing with others, it became clear that others were wrestling with similar issues and questions. Lindberg describes the moon shell as milky and opaque, with the pinkish bloom of the sky on a summer evening, ripening to rain. On its smooth symmetrical face is penciled with precision a perfect spiral, winding inward to the pinpoint center of the shell . . . . It stares at me, this mysterious single eye—and I stare back. It becomes the moon, solitary in the sky, full and round, replete with power. For Anne Morrow Lindbergh, this shell symbolized a time of solitude during a busy time of life when it seemed nearly impossible to achieve. Practicing solitude for an hour each day required a break from family life. Lindberg saw this as so difficult and painful she likened it to an amputation. She also found daily solitude to be revolutionary and essential.

"Solitude," says the moon shell. "Center-down," say the Quaker saints. "To possession of the self the way is inward," says Plotinus. "The cell of self-knowledge is the stall in which the pilgrim must be reborn," says Catherine of Siena.

Novelist Sue Monk Kidd wrote a moving account of coming to consciousness as a feminist in a patriarchal culture. In *Dance of the Dissident Daughter* she describes her struggle to remain in



confined quarters of the soul but she was repeatedly forced out of a safe, comfortable existence which no longer fit. She had no choice but to move on. Kidd describes the unfolding of ever-larger rooms for her soul's passage to awareness and a whole new way of thinking, writing and communicating with others.

I'm aware that no two women's journeys into the Sacred Feminine are the same. Nor is any book a complete picture of that journey. Each woman sends out her own unique vibration. When we start on this journey, we discover a couple of things right away. First, the way is largely uncharted and second, we are all we've got. If as women we don't tell our stories and utter our truths—who will? When my husband emerged after years of employment at the same job, and could find only one option that was hours from our home, we went through a series of adjustments. We were brought to a new life nautilus in a

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new state, with a new home and the blessings of a whole new life. The career that unfolded for me was one I had not considered. I moved from a career in federal media production to the academic life of a researcher and teacher of communication. Leaving a “room” I scarcely knew I had outgrown, I now look back and see I was headed for a more spacious accommodation for the spirit.

As a researcher, I now study the experiences of those in the latter stages of aging. It seems like a luxury to be able to explore the darker and lighter sides of this unknown passage which lies before me. As I prepare for what will someday be other rooms in my spiritual house, I take comfort in what I have learned from the men and women who have entered this stage ahead of me. It is the honest wisdom of those I study and the comments of far-thinking authors and researchers that have become my greatest joy.

A nautilus shell graces a shelf in our bedroom, perched above a small bulb that when switched on turns the shell into a lamp, bathing the room in a soft pink light. In this peaceful light, I pause for a moment and realize the nautilus shell is defined not by its walls but by its openings. This a powerful symbol of passage to whatever “room” awaits. SJ



Pamela Poe is an Assistant Professor of Communication at Manhattan College in Riverdale, NY, and writes about health, communication and aging research. A former church musician, K-12 music teacher, video documentary producer, playwright and federal media specialist, she is curious to see what “rooms” await.

# Praying to Sophia: Deepening Our Relationship With Holy Wisdom

JOYCE RUPP

**I had no intention of writing about Divine Wisdom** until the moment when I saw my friend's two-year-old daughter Elizabeth dancing around, smelling flowers in her family's rose garden. Even then I did not comprehend that what I had surfaced in my consciousness was a connection with the beautiful verse from Proverbs 8 in which Sophia describes herself as playing in the universe at the time of creation. As I contemplated the young, dancing child in the rose garden, I found myself taking pen and paper and beginning to write about Holy Wisdom. That moment gave rise to *The Star in My Heart*.

Elizabeth is now a budding young woman. She has grown a lot. So have I. At the time when Elizabeth danced among the flowers in a Sophia-like posture, I barely knew that "Sophia" was the Greek word for Wisdom. I did know how unusual it is to have Wisdom referred to as "she" and "her" in the Bible and that it is rare to have any biblical references about feminine as a divine quality. However, I had only a tiny awareness of the depth and the beauty found in the scriptural passages referring to Sophia. I had been attracted to wisdom for a long time, but my cultural conditioning had kept me viewing wisdom as a "thinking," quality or a characteristic of the Divine but not the Divine herself. The Biblical wisdom texts do contain wise sayings (things), such as those in Proverbs, but they also contain passages that refer directly to wisdom as a person.

It was only when I prayerfully dwelt inside the scripture passages that contain the "wisdom literature," that I really came to a personal relationship with Sophia. I moved from viewing "wisdom" as a quality of the Divine One to perceiving "Wisdom" as the Divine One herself. It was then that I began





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naming Sophia as the One for whom I have yearned and the One whom I have known for a long, long time. Since then, after nearly ten years of praying daily to the Divine in the name of Sophia, I realize in a much fuller way how deeply and tenderly she is a part of me.

Having said this, I also want to note that I believe all our names for the Divine, whether male or female, are inadequate. All these metaphors are our feeble human attempts and projections as we try to draw near to the Mysterious One. Probably the only adequate name for the Holy One is that which was written long ago: "I Am Who I Am," Exodus 3:14. In order to have a personal relationship, however, it is helpful to name the Divine. "Sophia" has become the best divine name for my prayer. I resonate immensely with her qualities of guidance, truth-bringing, and companionship. She is always with me as I search for the way home, which is what I am consistently doing on my spiritual path.

Sophia always draws me up and outward once I have been led down and inward. It is a cycle that I trust. I do believe that I am a much more compassionate woman for having sat in Sophia's presence. I do not know where she will lead me in the future. I only know that I am deeply grateful for having come to her. It is with my heart in her heart, with joy and gratitude, that I offer the following prayer and spiritual practice:

Joyce Rupp is a member of the Servite (Servants of Mary) community. She is well known for her work as a writer, spiritual "midwife," and retreat and conference speaker. Excerpted from *Prayers to Sophia: Deepening Our Relationship with Holy Wisdom* and used with permission © Sorin Books, an imprint of Ave Maria Press [www.avemariapress.com](http://www.avemariapress.com)

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## COMMITMENT

Wise and Faithful Guide,  
you lovingly abide in my depths  
and graciously guide my every step.  
You lead me to ever stronger growth  
and draw me more fully toward inner freedom.  
I thank you today for the awesome ways  
in which you constantly enter my life  
as I pledge my heart to you again.

This day I renew my life's purpose  
of being faithful to our relationship.  
I give you my openness,  
trusting that you will lead me on paths  
that are meant to help me grow.  
I re-commit my intention  
to listen to you in all life.

I promise you my daily discipleship  
so that I may be an instrument of your love.  
Most of all, I give you the loyalty of my heart.  
May I do all in the circle of your wisdom  
and learn from your dance of compassion  
in every corner of the universe.  
Source of Inner Luminosity,  
thank you for being a loving radiance.  
May the lantern of your perpetual goodness always  
shine in me and through me.

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Reflect on what you most want to dedicate to Sophia.  
Are there qualities you feel called to develop and deepen?  
Is there a promise that awaits your keeping?  
Now write your commitment to Sophia.

*Fellowship in Prayer joined the Interfaith Dialog Center of Central Jersey in hosting Abraham's Table: An Interfaith Dialogue Luncheon, 2010. This year's theme was Women of the Covenant. The panel was moderated by Princeton Community TV talk show host and life success coach, Natasha Sherman. ([www.vimeo.com/channels/natasha](http://www.vimeo.com/channels/natasha)). During the Q&A, an attendee raised the following compelling question, "What can we do now, as people of faith, to make sure our children are aware of women's contributions in our respective religions, since they have been excluded, often intentionally? Here are the presenters' responses.*

## ... In Judaism

RABBI NANCY FUCHS-KREIMER



Much of what we know about Judaism and Jewish history we know from the perspective of Jewish men. It is a challenge—and an exciting one—to try to uncover women's voices, especially in the pre-modern period.

As we re-read ancient texts, we sometimes see them in new ways. We Jews have been reading the Torah for many centuries now, and yet there are things that we have failed to notice, the first, second or even fortieth time around. Perhaps, it is only when we put on "spectacles of gender" that we catch the feminine references and recognize the significance of women in particular passages. For example, take the joyousness described in Exodus after Moses led Israel across the Sea of Reeds. There is one line in that text, "And Miriam took out her timbrel and all the women danced." For 2000 years commentators simply passed over this line. At the end of the 20th century, a Jewish feminist asked: If the Israelites had to rush out of Egypt so quickly they barely had





time to bake their matzo, how is it that Miriam had her timbrel along? Perhaps Miriam was a prayer leader and her timbrel was her professional equipment. Let's acknowledge Miriam and the significant leadership role she evidently held in this community. Let's bring tambourines to Jewish services, and play them as part of our worship, recalling Miriam and the dancing women.

Or take a more recent example. This August, Stanford University Press will publish an important contribution to modern Jewish history, Shulamith Magnus' translation and commentary on the work of Pauline Wengeroff, *Memoirs of a Grandmother: Scenes from the Cultural History of the Jews of Russia in the Nineteenth Century*. Wengeroff lived through the tumultuous transition from traditional Jewish life to a time of Jewish emancipation and she records that experience through her own lens, that of a woman who sees both the gains and losses of the shift in her role. Because this is the voice of a woman telling her own story, reading it with the context explained will help historians tell the story of the Jewish transition to modernity in a new, more nuanced way.

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And nuance is definitely part of the picture. Jewish women have been highly successful in claiming their place in non-Orthodox Judaism. In fact, in liberal circles today, we are talking about a different problem, that of the “vanishing Jewish male.” (I have heard there are similar conversations going on in the main-line Protestant world.) As women have claimed their place in the leadership of our synagogues, these places have become more attractive to women. What seems to be getting lost is the male bonding that once characterized religious life for Jewish men. It is clear that finding our way to more gender equality is a complex and challenging process. I hope that our growing awareness of the challenges and opportunities inherent in diversity—racial, ethnic, religious or gender difference—will guide us toward fruitful new paths. **SJ**

Rabbi Nancy Fuchs-Kreimer was ordained by the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in 1982. She holds a Ph.D. in Jewish-Christian Relations from Temple University where she is Founder and Director of the Department of Multi-Faith Studies and Initiatives. She teaches a new course entitled “Moslem and Jewish Dialog in America” at City College in New York. She is active on the Board of the Interfaith Center of Philadelphia and Clergy Beyond Borders. She has published articles in a variety of academic and popular journals including *Jewish Social Studies*, *Cross Currents*, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* and *The Reconstructionist*. She is the author of *Parenting as a Spiritual Journey* and is currently writing a new book of spiritual essays by Jewish Women.

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## ... In Islam

DR. INGRID MATTSON

In Islam, we are at the stage where we are still uncovering our history, especially the stories of Muslim women in society. If you ask most Muslim women about the women who were companions of the prophet Mohammed, they will have a difficult time identifying any other than those in his immediate family. In *Companions of the Prophet* by Abdul Wahid Hamid, a popular collection intended to inspire followers of the Prophet, there are plenty of male scholars and warriors, but few women are mentioned at all. Nonetheless, I think there is a line to be drawn between the deliberate and non-deliberate exclusion of women. For example, I remember a few years ago being at a program meeting for the annual convention of the Islamic Society of North America when we asked the group for names of potential speakers. After reviewing them I had to say, "Well, you know, at least 50% of our community is made up of women, African-Americans are 35% and here we have the names of almost exclusively Arab or Pakistani men." They acknowledged that was a problem when it was brought to their attention.



Were they deliberately excluding women? I don't think so. They were just thinking of the people they know, the people they hang out with, the people they're close to. Their exclusion of women wasn't intentional but their recommendations weren't well thought out either. I suggested that for the next couple of years—at least until we developed a better habit of reaching out and trying to make relationships with people outside of our immediate circles—we were going to use a filter, a kind of minimum quota system. Otherwise, we would only go with the people we know around us and they all look like us. I think we need to be careful not to overlook whole groups of people, but we also need to give those whom we think are doing the excluding the benefit of the doubt,

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so they are encouraged to do better in this regard. Women have been excluded from a lot of history because they just weren't in the circles of those writing the history. This is different today. Mohammad Akram Nadwi, a great scholar in the UK and a brilliant man, has just completed a forty volume collection of biographies of women *hadith* scholars over the centuries.

There is a further interesting question, however, in this regard. Do we, as women in a Muslim community really want to throw all of our eggs in the basket of formalized, centralized official religious leadership and leave the informal, decentralized, personal type of religious leadership behind? Let's think about what this means. In a traditional Muslim majority society, where does an average Muslim get his or her guidance and direction about what to do, what career they should chose, whom they should marry? Primarily they get direction from their families. Life is orchestrated in families, neighborhoods, communities and with friends. In this context, of course, women have always had a lot of power; both because of the way families are structured, and normatively through the teachings found in the Qur'an which say to "revere the wombs that bore you." When a man posed this question to the Prophet Mohammed, (peace be upon him) "To whom do I owe my greatest duty and respect?" The Prophet replied, "Your mother." The man queried again, "And then who?" And the Prophet said, "Your mother." He continued, "And then who?" "Your mother." "And then who?" The Prophet finally replied, "Then your father."

Women contribute a lot to the structure of family and society, offering guidance about rights and responsibilities, demonstrating what it means to be a good person, a good Muslim. So, women have a form of leadership that is diffused. And although we may value the role of mothers, this is not the only set role for women. There needs to be balance for men and women, roles to match different personalities and characteristics. Not every woman is going to be a mother, not every man—a scholar or warrior. God could have given all of Mohammed's wives children, but he did not, so this says to me that God chose something else for these





women. They were called upon to spend their lives in education, scholarship, charity work, economic redistribution—all noble callings as well. Finally, I want to say that I am

fascinated by women's roles in congregational prayer. One of the questions that many people raise now is whether or not women can lead mixed gender prayer. The Qur'an talks about women and men being spiritual equals, so what does this say about such leadership? When a man leads a congregation, he steps in front of everyone else. It is a hierarchical arrangement. When a woman leads the congregational prayer, she stands in the middle of the line with other women. She is still the leader, but a leader at the same level as the women beside her. I think there is something important here about the different kinds of leadership we need to retain. If women only look at what men are doing and how they are doing it as a model for themselves, we could lose some of the value of the way women do things. Through example, through mentoring, women pass the wisdom of women from one generation to the next. **SJ**

Dr. Ingrid Mattson is Professor of Islamic Studies, Founder and Director of the Islamic Chaplaincy Program and Director of Islam for the McDonald Center for the Study of Islamic and Christian-Muslim Relations at Hartford Seminary in Connecticut. She has written articles exploring the relationship between Islamic law and society, as well as gender and leadership issues in contemporary Muslim communities. She is author of *The Story of the Qur'an: Its History and Place in Muslim Life*. Dr. Mattson is serving her second term as President of the Islamic Society of North America, ISNA, a position to which she was first elected in 2006 after having served two terms as Vice President.

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## ... In Christianity

DR. WESTINA MATTHEWS



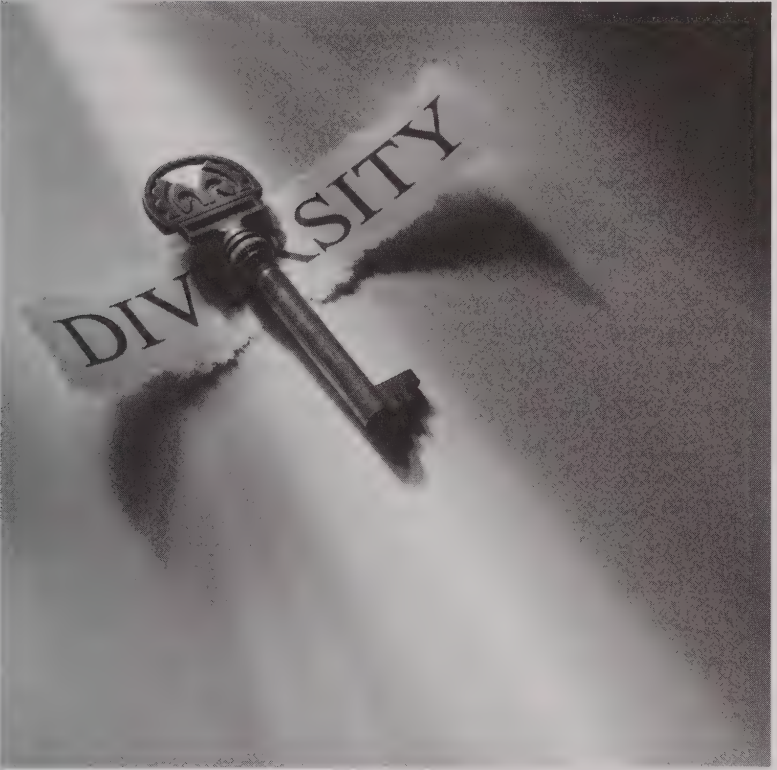
During my lifetime I've experienced and witnessed many "isms" in the world. As much as we like to say "isms" no longer exist, racism, sexism, religionism, homophobia, etc. do still sadly exist.

The women's movement was a response to sexism but many questions remain about what has been lost and gained through it. There's certainly no question in my mind that women's voices early on in the Church were not heard but this was not just the result of what men did or didn't do in our various faith traditions.

Some of the greatest opposition women have experienced has come from other women. This is true not only in the church but in the business world as well. Some of this may be related to the notion, "If I couldn't do thus and so, why should you?" Such insecurity is the result of fear and some of it may be resistance to change. One way or another, I think it is important for us to remember the history of Christian women is not just her story or his story, it is my story and your story. It is both women's and men's story.

When we are mindful and intentional about being inclusive, we are shaping a whole new way for women to be involved and engaged for the future. I think this is what is really exciting. My own faith journey has been intentionally inclusive, influenced very much by my parents. From my father I learned that there are multiple voices, male and female, black and white, Jew, Muslim and Christian, gay and straight, old and young, and together our voices can be one of universal prayer, of gratitude to God for the beautiful gift of life and creation. Like the three strangers who visited Abraham and benefited from his hospitality, each and every one of us can choose to break bread

together with the intention of building and rebuilding communities of peace. I have a granddaughter who is six-months old and I am eager to show her this can be done and I have a lot of faith in her. Maybe she and her generation will get it right. 51



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Westina is an accomplished author, retreat leader, inspirational speaker, spiritual director and recently retired Wall Street executive where she was responsible for philanthropic programs and community relations. Westina is an Adjunct at General Theological Seminary. She is actively engaged on the boards of the International Women's Forum, Shalem Institute for Spiritual Direction and KidSpirit. Westina is the author of the *Have-a-Little-Faith* series, she is currently writing her fourth book entitled *Have a Little Faith in the Corporate Wilderness*.

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# Free At Last

MARY BYRNE HOFFMANN

When I was a young girl, my secret place of refuge was the sanctuary of our local parish church. I wasn't particularly pious, definitely not an introvert, normal in most other ways except that I loved to sit in church. I suppose, looking back, it was simply the sense of being somewhere else. Not quite "here." Not quite "there." Somewhere on the cusp where the enveloping ether from another realm seeped through the dimness and the silence of that inner chamber and embraced me. In the company of Jesus, Mary and a welcoming crowd of saints, I had found my constant imaginary friends. No words. Just sweet emptiness. I was consoled.

Years later, I walked out of church disconsolate with bitter emptiness. The sanctuary, womb of my innocent bliss, had now become the bastion of a bully theology that scorned and excluded the "sinners"—the divorced, women called to priesthood, the gay and lesbian faithful—in the name of God. I looked around at all my imaginary friends and saw statues fixed and resolute in their complicity. They had become mere figments of my imagination. I felt abandoned.

There followed a hollow time. The desire for somewhere else, something more having been betrayed degenerated into cravings for fickle substitutions. I went looking for God in all the wrong places and in the process found myself in a "darkling wood astray"—so begins *The Divine Comedy* by Dante. But, always there was this yearning like a faint beacon in the distance offering reassurance to my despair. The light on the porch kept burning for the wayward daughter.

Looking back, it was all one and the same and all about grace—the consolation, the disconsolation, the loss, the seeking, the finding. If there is a constant prayer, it is the quest



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for God in all the places of one's life. I realized this one day in a moment of what I call "psalming"—a full body prayer that pounds on the floor and begs for God to return. And as if God was always there, as if it was me who had vacated the premises, suddenly there was a shift. The slight recognition of a familiar place. Not here. Not there. Some place breathing behind the porous veil in between. Not a miracle. A response. The porch light.

Years later, having gratefully coursed the circuit of seeking many times, I am not sure who God is anymore. The timing of this late-in-life faith crisis is comically ironic. When I was young, I was certain. I knew who God was because I knew

If there is a constant prayer,  
it is the quest for God  
in all the places of one's life.

where God was. The sanctuary of the local church was a safe haven of answers. Now, in the last third of my life, when I really could use those answers, there are none. Some exit strategy! But, as it turns out, this is a relief. Both God and I have been released into the sanctuary of the present moment which is anywhere we are called to life.

I use the term "we" because somehow it is clear that God and I and God and you are indeed just a thin veil apart breathing into one another all the time and then together breathing into the world over and over again—making all things new. And even now as I am writing this, I am laughing at the mere notion that I am speaking about God at all. Really, I have no clue about who or what Karl Rahner calls the "Holy Mystery." It is just a sense, a visceral response. Like the way that the body responds to rhythm with dance. The soul finds its

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partner and leaps into life—bending, twisting, turning, soaring, falling, rising, starting all over again. And all of it is prayer—the constant bow to the unseen partner despite the unorchestrated movements of unrelenting suffering and enduring joy in an ever-unfolding imperfect world. Prayer is relentless hope in the resiliency of creation. It is the "yes" to our role in continuity. It is an implicit agreement to abdicate the fear of certainty for the love of the unexpected.

Not long ago, I was sitting on a bench at a retreat house that overlooks the Hudson River. It is a particularly beautiful spot where the river suddenly curves and swells into a shimmering pregnant belly. It was early morning. The river and all her inhabitants were coming to life. Barges were moving slowly down the river. Off in the distance, I could hear the haunting sound of an oncoming train. Hovering in the air by the river edge were soaring birds on the prowl. Nearby, in the trees, smaller birds were flitting and singing their morning songs. All around me, life was responding to a new day. In unison, we were praying each in our own way, consciously or not what does it matter, we were beginning again, agreeing to be part of this life, hard and wondrous as it is, for one more day.

I had my song, too, that morning. An "Alleluia" to a sanctuary of flowing river and brightening sky and waking birds and sleepy commuters speeding by on the Hudson-Harlem line. A sanctuary that was no longer a refuge but a harsh and beautiful reality where God was not a consolation but a revelation. A sanctuary where God and I were free to roam the possibilities of creation and where prayer is gratitude for, as John McQuiston wrote, "the true joy of the work that we will be about this day." SJ



Mary Byrne Hoffmann is founder of Breathing Space, a non-profit that facilitates Rights of Passage for youth, adults and communities. She is the author of a book on spiritual transformation in a digital age to be published in March 2011 and is currently writing a book about the spirituality of the Hudson River.

# Garden Light

MICHAEL S. GLASER

let us seek to paint what we experience here...  
not in detail, but broad brush strokes

capturing sunlight and the shadows that lace  
the gravel paths, the grass,

the flowers, radiant in their beds,  
and the sky, its white clouds drifting against the blue.

Everything as it is, insists on itself:  
the song birds, the owls, the lady bugs,

each a reminder of this opportunity  
for adoration, for doing and saying nothing,

for embracing, as we might,  
the generous gift of this garden light.

Michael S. Glaser is a Professor Emeritus at St. Mary's College of Maryland where he received the Dodge Endowed Award for Excellence in Teaching. Michael has served as a Maryland State Arts Council poet-in-the-schools for over twenty years and is active with the Maryland Humanities Council's Speakers Bureau. He served as Poet Laureate of Maryland from August 2004—August 2009. [www.smcm.edu/poet](http://www.smcm.edu/poet)

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# Buddha Lesson

CJ MUCHHALA

Like the gecko  
that is not  
on the white  
washed wall,  
then is,  
and when you turn  
to look again  
is gone,  
so too, my desire.

Wind batters  
the door bolted  
against it.  
In the mountains,  
sun rains.  
Hot. Fierce.  
No clouds, no mercy.

The parched earth  
turns to dust,  
relinquishes thirst:  
*blessed nirvana*

CJ Muchhala is a member of Milwaukee Friends Meeting. She is a widely published Pushcart Prize nominee. Her most recent work can be found in *Rhino 2010* and *Pearl 42*. This poem was inspired by the Buddhist cave monuments of Ajanta which she visited during a three-month stay in India.



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# My Birthday Walk

RICHARD BOEKE

Took a birthday walk into the woods.  
Made an offering of bread to birds and rabbits.  
Chanted my Shinto purification: "Hari Tami"  
Then some deep AUMs as Amen.

Sat under an Oak Tree as wide as I'm tall.  
Snoozed and meditated in the warm sun.  
In the field the cows were content.  
I sang "Into the woods my Master went . . ."

My frustrations unwound.  
In the Trinity of Tree, Sky and Earth  
Blessing replaced my frown . . .  
A good day to have a new birth!

Born in Atlanta, GA, Richard Boeke currently lives in Sussex, England. He is a Vice President of the World Congress of Faiths ([www.worldfaiths.org](http://www.worldfaiths.org)) and is currently preparing for the World Congress of the International Association for Religious Freedom being held in Kerala, India, September 1-7, 2010 ([www.IARF.net](http://www.IARF.net)). He has served as a US Air Force chaplain and as Vice President of the Tsubaki Shrine of America. He is Minister Emeritus of the UU Church of Berkley, CA.

## CONNECT—

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Fellowship in Prayer maintains that peace in our world and hope for the future resides in a global community of prayer. When you join our Online Community you will be able to connect with others to share spiritual practices within and across religious traditions as a path to more effective and compassionate social action.

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Using the right navigation bar, click “Join Online Community.” Complete your member profile and you will be able to join an existing prayer circle or create one of your own, participate in One-in-Prayer, comment on our blog, *Step In & Step Up*, check our events calendar, and post your own events.

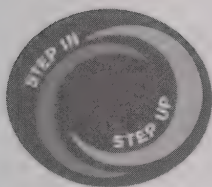
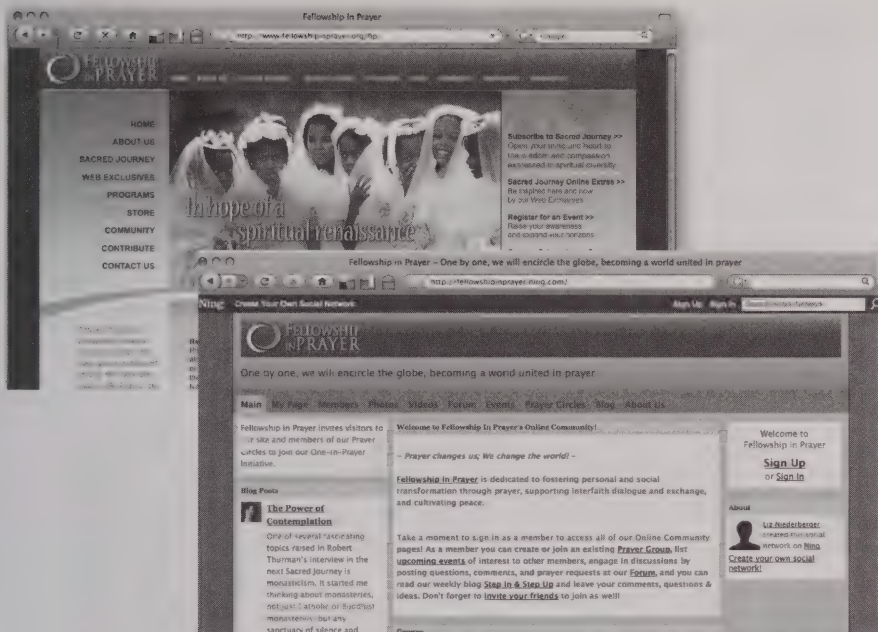
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collectively focusing our spiritual attention and energy in this way.

To make it even easier for you to participate when you join Fellowship in Prayer's Online Community, you can elect to receive One-in-Prayer weekly email updates.



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*A Blog by Rev. DeeAnn Weir*

Be sure to read Fellowship in Prayer's blog. Join DeeAnn as she reflects on the interface between spiritual practice and deep personal or social transformation and considers the profound wisdom rooted in religious diversity.

DeeAnn shares inspiration gleaned from reading *SACRED JOURNEY*. She speaks from the depth and breadth of her own spiritual practice and reflects on pressing social issues and—once you join the conversation—your questions and comments. **Step In** to spiritual awareness and **Step Up** to meet today's challenges!



DEEANN WEIR

# The Maternal Face of God

RICHARD ROHR

One of the things that led me into male spirituality was that most people have experienced their God image by experiencing the image of their mother. They experienced unconditional love not through the image of man, but through the image of mother. I realized how wounded the father relationship is with so many people.

For much of the human race, the mother is the one who parts the veil for us. She gives us that experience of grounding, of intimacy, of tenderness, of safety that most of us associate with our image of God. However, many people operate from a toxic and negative image of God. Nothing wonderful is ever going to happen as long as that is true. Early growth in spirituality is often about healing that inner image, whether male or female.

Most of us know that God is beyond gender. When we look at the Book of Geneses 1:26-27, we see that the first thing God is looking for is quite simply “images.” God is not looking for servants, for slaves or for people who are going to pass loyalty tests. God is just looking for images—“images and likenesses” of who God is. God divided this one whole image and likeness into what we call masculine and feminine. Whoever God is, is profoundly and essentially what it means to be male and female. We have to find and to trust the feminine face of God and the masculine face of God. Both are true and both are necessary for a full relationship with God. Up to now, we have strongly relied upon the masculine.

Franciscan Fr. Richard Rohr, the founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation, an international speaker, teacher and author of numerous books including *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer*; *Things Hidden: Scripture as Spirituality*. Adapted from the *Maternal Face of God*, a three-part discussion series and used with permission. [www.cacradicalgrace.org](http://www.cacradicalgrace.org)





# Sing! Sing! Sing!

RUTHIE ROSAUER

**Bite into a whole ripe tomato,** warm from the vine. Taste its salt on your tongue; wipe its juice from your chin with the back of your hand. Then, watch someone else eat a tomato salad; thick sliced tomatoes layered between cucumbers and onions, swimming in vinegar and crowned with crushed basil leaves. Which do you prefer—eating, or watching someone else eat?

Watching someone else eat may hold a charm for some, especially if they have personally prepared the salad for a loved one. But no matter how lovingly the chef may have prepared the tomato, or the gusto of the other diner, the secondhand experience usually falls far short of the bliss imparted by one bite of the tomato itself.

For me, the same distinction applies to music. Under certain circumstances I can be content to listen to someone else sing without joining in. But more often than not, my

impulse to click my tongue, tap my finger, or sing along is nearly irresistible. Somehow I don't fully enjoy music if I'm only listening to it. My spirit yearns to express itself by engaging my body in creating the music.

I know I'm not the only one who feels this way. Across the millennia there has been a powerful human impulse to sing and make music. This impulse is firmly intertwined with the human urge to connect to the mystical Source of Life. For example, the illuminated sages of the Upanishads believe Brahma created the world by chanting the syllable *Om*. Aboriginals in Australia hold all land as sacred and sing their 'songlines' continuously to keep the land alive. Hopi legend says Spider Woman brought life to inanimate forms by singing songs over them. The God of David admonished in Psalm 47:6, "Sing praises to God, sing praises!"

Physiologically, humans are built to respond to music—the same brain structures are activated by music as other euphoric stimuli such as food and sex. It's no surprise music has been a powerful component of spiritual practices, healing, and community building since the dawn of civilization.

production for those who sang. Listening did not have the same effect on the immune system.

As a youngster growing up in the Church of the Nazarene, I didn't know anything about the antibodies in my blood or euphoric stimuli in my brain. But I learned early that singing made me feel connected to

## The juxtaposition of song types and variations of tempo swirl into a vocal collage.

The power of music, especially singing, finds support in modern scientific research into the effect of singing on human physiology. In a study of a senior citizen choral group, the level of antibody production was noticeably higher after singing. But blood samples from the same group after they simply listened to a recording of the same music did not result in increased antibodies.

Researchers in Germany tested an amateur choir and found improvements in emotional mood and antibody

God. My heart, spirit and soul would swell, lift and soar with the powerful melodies and supporting harmonies of "Precious Lord Take my Hand" and "Just a Closer Walk with Thee." Even now my heart thrills when I sing, "When They Ring Those Golden Bells" or "There's Within My Heart a Melody."

I would be especially excited when one of the adults would interrupt the sermon with a spontaneous burst of singing that the Lord had laid on his or her heart. This person would

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stand and start singing a song as testimony; “Jesus, Lover of my Soul” or perhaps “Let Your Lower Lights be Burning.” The rest of us would join in lustily while the pianist and organist scrambled to match our key. And then our voices would pelt the heavens and joy would rain down and saturate our souls. Basking in this euphoric afterglow I was confident of my relationship with God. Sadly, that afterglow often dwindled into ashes before the postlude was concluded.

I left the Nazarene church when I was sixteen and became a spiritual seeker, sampling the religions of the world both major and minor. Along the way I stopped singing because I got the impression that my voice was not ‘good enough’ to sing.

I sang again for the first time in over a decade when I participated in Taizé singing at the Findhorn Community in northern Scotland. Rivers of joy coursed through my vocal cords and pumped spirit into my heart. One twenty-minute session and I re-learned the power of singing firsthand to transform my parched soul.

Singing with a small group of other singers tapped into a well-spring of sacred spirit. I was hooked on singing as a spiritual practice.

There are too many of us in the world today who feel that if we are not professional quality singers we should not sing in the presence of anyone else. As a result, we deny ourselves the pleasures and benefits of singing. There are plenty of other activities we engage in as amateurs—even though there are also paid professionals who perform those tasks—photographs, food, and education come to mind. Yet we still photograph our families, feed our friends, and teach our toddlers. It is about time we add singing to the list of activities we enjoy, even if we are amateurs at it.

I traveled to the Taizé community in France shortly thereafter. I bought every CD and songbook they had published. Singing along with the Taizé CDs at home alone was a definite improvement in my life; but not enough. For one thing, the Taizé repertoire is limited to songs of Christian belief—and I am of the inter-



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faith persuasion that there are many paths to God. I wanted my personal spiritual practice to reflect this belief.

The other problem was that singing alone was not nearly as powerful, or joyful, as singing in community. In an effort to create that community of voices, I began offering Singing Meditation as an interfaith spiritual practice layering vocalization with group observation of silence. I found alternating these two practices resulted in a synergy that enhanced each component.

The vocalization in Singing Meditation expresses and builds upon the body's own natural vibration patterns; the beat of our hearts, the hum of our circulatory system, the sigh of our breath. At its best it is a constellation of voices and vibrations lifting us beyond the channels of our ordinary lives and builds an ephemeral song-bridge to the Divine. The repertoire is decidedly interfaith: Buddhist chants, Hindu kirtan, Christian Taizé songs, Jewish *niggunim*, chants from earth-centered beliefs, Sufi dance tunes, songs of universal appeal,

and songs from paths as yet unnamed – all are welcomed at the Singing Meditation feast. No sermons interrupt the ebb and flow of song alternated with silence. Occasionally participants will read a short inspirational quote or poem.

During a session, the juxtaposition of song types and variations of tempo swirl into a vocal collage—a unique creation of that time and spirit. The textures of a chant prepare the mind to appreciate the harmonies that follow. The brilliant color of a round may remain as an aura surrounding a *nigun*. For me, this pastiche of sound distracts the busy monkey mind of my daily day life and I sink deeply into the silence.

The silence is completely undirected by the session's facilitator. During each interval of silence the participants are free to connect with their own Inner Core of guidance, pray to God, contemplate the Ultimate Mystery, silently recite a mantra, etc.


I have been facilitating Singing Meditation for six years in one-hour sessions,

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three-day retreats, at church conferences and one-day workshops. I hear over and over again from participants some variation on this theme: My Third Grade Teacher told me I couldn't sing. I haven't tried to sing for 50 years until today. TODAY I AM SINGING! It feels so good!

These people are awestruck to re-discover how good it feels to sing. And how easy it is. The hardest part is letting go of the fear that someone else will judge you. In Singing Meditation there is no need to strive for

an external measure of perfection – because there is no audience. Participants are free to open their souls in song and allow the unconditional love of Spirit to flow through them.

When it comes to choosing my own spiritual practice I prefer to eat the tomato, not watch someone else eat one. I encourage you to bite into the Singing Meditation experience firsthand and taste the bliss of a song sung deeply into your soul. 

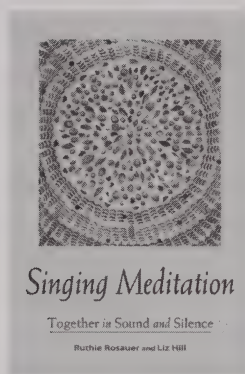


Ruthie Rosauer is a Unitarian Universalist living in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. A passionate amateur musician, she has been leading Singing Meditation groups since 2004. She is co-author of the seminal book on Singing Meditation, *Singing Meditation: Together in Sound and Silence* with Liz Hill.

# *Singing Meditation* Together in Sound and Silence

BY RUTHIE ROSAUER AND LIZ HILL

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This book introduces the spiritual practice of singing meditation, which combines repetitive singing in short, simple, interfaith songs with periods of undirected silence. Suitable for beginners as well as experienced singers, singing meditation uses the power of song to connect the heart and mind. This volume includes an overview of the musical and religious roots of singing meditation, instructions for participants and facilitators, as well as sample songs.

Authors Ruthie Rosauer and Liz Hill who, in this book, have amassed an overview of the musical religious roots of singing meditation from diverse traditions agree that the words "Come, come, whoever you are," may sound like an enticing invitation, yet some might still wonder if their voices would be welcome at a singing meditation session. They say the answer is a resounding yes!

Endorsed by Clarissa Pinkola Estes, Ph.D. who writes, "In a culture that often severs musical and artistic talent from all except a few anointed ones, this book is restorative!"


# Living in a Sacred Silence

COLETTE HANLON

**William Penn wrote: “True silence is to the spirit what sleep is to the body: nourishment and refreshment.”** Most of us admit that we do not get sufficient sleep, eat healthily every day or create silence in our daily lives. Yet we long for the wholeness silence offers.

Summer is a wonderful time to develop a practice of sacred silence because of the beautiful spaces that offer us opportunities. What difference would it make, for example, if while jogging we simply listened to the birds, the wind, the sounds around us inviting us to a deeper interiority and appreciation for nature.

If we were to hesitate before turning on the radio or TV, what might the silence do for us at the start of our busy lives? One man said that he cherishes “ceiling moments” at work. He pauses throughout his day to sit and look at the ceiling – one place that does not remind him of unfinished duties. A woman straightening her home might take a longer look at the plants and flowers she waters to really see their beauty.

Perhaps we can each pray for sacred silence in words such as these: “Good and ever present God, give me the courage to embrace the quiet, to welcome stillness, even to accept boredom, so that I might hear your voice calling to me to recognize and live my place in this beautiful world. Above all, O God of silent gifts, help me to turn off the TV! Amen.” 

Colette Hanlon is a member of the Sisters of Charity, Seton Hill. She is an experienced spiritual director, teacher, chaplain, director of pastoral care and a frequent contributor to *SACRED JOURNEY*. Her main interest is teaching the integration of spirituality in everyday life. She has focused on the role of holistic care in maintaining health and coping with illness and the diminishments of aging and dying.



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